

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18363

LIMDIS

FOR NYE FROM KAHAN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM, TECH, FR, US
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON BILATERAL NUCLEAR NON-
PROLIFERATION ISSUES

1. DURING PERIODIC MEETING BETWEEN US AND FRENCH
POLICY PLANNING STAFFS, GERGORIN (DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
FRENCH PLANNING STAFF) OFFERED HIS VIEWS ON A NUMBER
OF BILATERAL NUCLEAR ISSUES, SPEAKING PERSONALLY.
US TEAM WAS COMPOSED OF LAKE, KAHAN, AND WALKER OF
S/P, TARNOFF OF S, AND ZIMMERMAN OF EUR. ADDITIONAL
FRENCH VIEWS EMERGED DURING A PERSONAL DISCUSSION
BETWEEN KAHAN AND GOLDSCHMIDT (CEA-INTERNATIONAL RELA-
TIONS), ALSO ATTENDED BY BENOIT D'ABOVILLE (MEMBER OF
FRENCH PLANNING STAFF).

2. GERGORIN TOOK THE POSITION THAT THE US WAS
ATTEMPTING TO INTERFERE IN FRENCH NATIONAL NUCLEAR
ENERGY POLICY IN CONTRADICTING THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED
BY PRESIDENT GISCARD AND PRESIDENT CARTER AT THE
LONDON SUMMIT. ALTHOUGH GERGORIN CONCEDED THAT THIS

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UNDERSTANDING WAS VERY GENERAL, HE CLAIMED THAT US
NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY WAS NEGATIVE AND BASED
ON A MUTUAL EXAMPLE PRINCIPLE WHICH DOES NOT TAKE
ACCOUNT OF FRANCE'S ENERGY SITUATION. GERGORIN SAID
THAT THREE KEY ISSUES WERE THREATENING TO DISRUPT
BILATERAL NUCLEAR RELATIONS: MB-10S APPROVALS TO
REPROCESS JAPANESE SPENT FUEL IN FRANCE, PRESSURE FOR

RENEGOTIATING THE US-EURATOM NUCLEAR AGREEMENT, AND CANADIAN (AND AUSTRALIAN) INTEREST IN GAINING VETO RIGHTS OVER FRENCH REPROCESSING AS A CONDITION FOR NATURAL URANIUM SUPPLY. THESE "EXTERNALITIES" MORE SPECIFICALLY WERE STANDING IN THE WAY OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN INFCEP. GERGORIN STRESSED THAT TENSIONS IN OUR NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP WERE UNFORTUNATE, SINCE FRANCE HAS BECOME THE US'S CLOSEST PARTNER ON NON-PROLIFERATION. HE SUGGESTED THAT FRANCE HAD A ROLE IN THE RECENTLY-ISSUED FRG NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT WHICH PARALLELS FRENCH (AND US) POLICY IN ITS REJECTION OF NEW REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS. COMMENT: GERGORIN MAY HAVE BEEN UNDULY STRINGENT IN HIS REMARKS RE THE US BECAUSE HE WAS SPEAKING IN FRONT OF HIS PEERS ON THE PLANNING STAFF, BEFORE WHOM HE IS CAREFUL TO DEMONSTRATE HIS PRO-FRENCH CREDENTIALS.

3. THE US TEAM RESPONDED TO GERGORIN'S POINTS BY UNDERSCORING THE POSITIVE FEATURES OF OUR NUCLEAR ENERGY POLICY (CITING FUEL ASSURANCES AS A PRIME EXAMPLE) AND OUR SENSITIVITY TO FRENCH ENERGY NEEDS. OUR POLICY IS TO ASK OTHERS TO PAUSE BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING AND TO EVALUATE THIS ISSUE AS WELL AS ALTERNATIVES, BUT NOT TO IMPOSE OUR WILL ON FRANCE'S OWN PROGRAMS. THE ISSUES OF MB-10S IS NOT ARBITRARY INTERVENTION IN FRANCE'S
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INTERNAL REPROCESSING PROGRAMS, BUT FLOWS FROM THE FACT THAT FUEL DERIVED FROM US ASSISTANCE IS INVOLVED AND A LEGAL BASIS EXISTS FOR US CONSENT IN OUR AGREEMENT WITH JAPAN. THE US TEAM INDICATED THAT OUR PLANNING TALKS SHOULD NOT BECOME A NEGOTIATING SESSION, AND THAT THOSE IN EACH GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP SHOULD SEEK TO RESOLVE BILATERAL DIFFERENCES THAT ARE NOW STANDING IN THE WAY OF INITIATING INFCEP.

4. WHILE REITERATING GERGORIN'S CONCERN OVER DETERIORATING US-FRENCH RELATIONS ON THIS ISSUE, GOLDSCHMIDT DISCUSSED BILATERAL NUCLEAR ISSUES IN A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER THAN GERGORIN. GOLDSCHMIDT'S MAIN POINTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE CANADIAN MUTUAL CONSENT PROBLEM IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO UNRESOLVED US-FRENCH PROBLEMS. FRANCE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A SOLUTION WHERE CANADA WOULD NOT PRESS FOR VETO RIGHTS IF FRANCE AGREES TO DISCUSS THE REPROCESSING QUESTION AFTER THE

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TWO-YEAR INFCEP EFFORT IS COMPLETED. HOWEVER, FRANCE WOULD RESIST INCLUSION OF A MUTUAL CONSENT PROVISION AT THIS TIME, EVEN IF CANADA AGREED NOT TO EXERCISE IT. AUSTRALIA WILL FOLLOW CANADA ON THIS MATTER. MORE GENERALLY, FRANCE FEARS VETO RIGHTS FROM SMALL COUNTRIES WHO MAY BECOME URANIUM SUPPLIERS.

B. THE EURATOM RENEGOTIATION ISSUE, ALTHOUGH UNPLEASANT, CAN BE SOLVED WITHOUT MAJOR PROBLEMS. AFTER ALL, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS. (COMMENT: GOLDSCHMIDT SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT IF BOTH SIDES SAT DOWN TO TALK, THE PRESSURE WOULD BE ALLEVIATED AND EURATOM WOULD NOT BE THREATENED.)

C. THE MB-10 ISSUE IS THE MOST SERIOUS. ONE YEAR AGO, THE US WOULD PROBABLY HAVE AGREED TO FRANCE'S REQUEST, AS LONG AS THE PLUTONIUM REMAINED IN FRANCE SUBJECT TO US CONTROL REGARDING RETURN TO JAPAN. IN MARCH, FRANCE WAS INFORMALLY ASSURED THAT THE US WOULD APPROVE MB-10S TO SUPPORT LA HAGUE'S OPERATION (BUT NOT EXPANSION) IF LA HAGUE WAS PART OF INFCEP. FRANCE PREFERS TWENTY YEARS ADVANCED APPROVAL, BUT MAY HAVE TO SETTLE FOR LESS. FRANCE COULD EXPAND LA HAGUE MORE SLOWLY WITH ITS OWN FUNDS IF NECESSARY WITHOUT THE
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JAPANESE CONTRACT, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN A "LOST OPPORTUNITY." BUT THE ISSUE IS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, AND THE US MUST SHOW SOME RESPONSIVENESS.

D. THE INFCEP "PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS" BEING PREPARED BY FRANCE IS ALMOST COMPLETED. IT IS NOT PARTICULARLY PROFOUND OR CONTROVERSIAL. IN BRIEF, THE ANALYSIS INDICATES THE COMMON COMMITMENT OF THE SEVEN TO NON-PROLIFERATION, CITES PROGRESS TO DATE, SUMMARIZES AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT (E.G., ALL SUPPORT FUEL ASSURANCES, BUT THERE IS DISAGREEMENT OVER THE NEED FOR REPROCESSING AND PLUTONIUM BREEDERS AS PART OF THEIR NATIONAL PROGRAMS), AND STATES THE WILLINGNESS OF THE SEVEN TO CONDUCT A TWO-YEAR INFCEP. THE US SHOULD PRESS FRANCE TO RELEASE THE ANALYSIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SO BILATERAL TALKS CAN BE HELD FOLLOWED BY A SECOND SEVEN-NATION EXPERTS MEETING (IF NECESSARY).

5. KAHAN REPLIED TO GOLDSCHMIDT'S REMARKS, ON A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS, THAT MB-10S WERE A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE FOR THE US FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY ON REPROCESSING, BUT THAT FRENCH CONCERNS WERE BEING GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. DECISIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS AND IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES AND BILATERAL NUCLEAR RELATIONS. KAHAN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT A WAY CAN BE FOUND TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES SO BOTH SIDES CAN CONTINUE TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY IN THE NON-PROLIFERATION FIELD.

6. COMMENT: GERGORIN'S ATTITUDE WAS MORE NEGATIVE THAN GOLDSCHMIDT'S, ALTHOUGH THIS COULD BE A MATTER OF STYLE. IF GOLDSCHMIDT'S VIEW PREVAILS, A
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COMPROMISE MIGHT WELL BE ATTAINABLE WITHOUT EXCESSIVE DELAY. BILATERALS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE WITHIN A WEEK OR TEN DAYS, IF WE RECEIVE THE "PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS" FROM FRANCE AND IF THE US HAD DEVELOPED ITS POSITION. THE SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETING THE TWO-MONTH STUDY MAY HAVE TO SLIP. THIS EMBASSY IS CONTINUING ITS CONTACT WITH THE QUAI (LOUET) FOR A COPY OF THE "PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS" AS SOON AS IT IS AVAILABLE.
GAMMON

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